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A SHORT
CHARACTER
OF
CHARLES II.
King of ENGLAND.

Written by JOHN Duke of BUCKINGHAM, Lord
President of Her late MAJESTY'S Privy-Council.

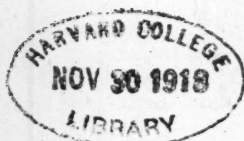
WITH THE
CONFERENCE
BETWEEN
The Duke of BUCKINGHAM,
AND
Father FITZGERALD,
AN IRISH JESUIT,
Sent by King JAMES the Ild, to convert his THEN
Grace in his Sickness to the ROMISH RELIGION.

Faithfully taken by his GRACE'S Secretary.



L O N D O N :

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*Gift of
J. Pierpont Morgan*

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A S H O R T
 CHARACTER
 O F
 King CHARLES II, &c.

Printed from the Original Copy.



H A V E pitch'd on this Character of King CHARLES the Second, not for his being a *King*, nor my having had the Honour to serve him; the *First* of these wou'd be too *Vulgar* a Consideration, and the other too *Particular*. But I think it a Theme of great *Variety*, and whatever is wanting in the Writer, may, I hope, be recompenced in the Agreeableness of the Subject, which is sometimes enough to recommend a Picture, tho' ill drawn; and to make a Face one likes, oft'ner look'd on, than the best Piece of *Raphael*.

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T o

To begin then, according to Custom, with his *Religion*, which since his Death hath made so much Noise in the World; I yet dare confidently affirm it to have been only that which is vulgarly, tho' unjustly counted none at all, I mean *Deism*. And this uncommon Opinion he owed more to the *Liveliness* of his Parts, and *Carelesness* of his Temper, than either to Reading, or much Consideration; for his Quickness of Apprehension, at first View, could discern through the several Cheats of Pious Pretences; and his natural *Laziness* confirm'd in him an equal *Mistrust* of them all, for Fear he should be troubled with examining which was best.

IF in his early *Travels*, and late *Designs*, he seem'd a little byas'd to one Sort of Religion; the *First* is only to be imputed to a certain *Easiness* of Temper, and a Complaisance for that Company he then was forc'd to keep; and the *Last* was no more than his being tir'd, which he soon was in any Difficulty, with those bold Oppositions in *Parliament*, which made him almost throw himself into the Arms of a *Roman Catholick* Party, so remarkable of late, for their *Loyalty*; who embraced him gladly, and lull'd him asleep with those enchanting Songs of SOVEREIGNITY and PREROGATIVE, which the best and wisest Princes are often unable to resist.

AND tho' he engag'd himself on that Side more fully, at a Season when 'tis in vain, and
too

too late to dissemble, we ought less to wonder at it, than to consider that our very Judgments are apt to grow in Time as *partial* as our Affections; and thus, by Accident only, he became of *their* Opinion in his *Weaknesses*, who had so much endeavoured always to contribute to his P O W E R.

H E lov'd Ease and Quiet, to which his unnecessary Wars are so far from being a Contradiction, that they are rather a Proof of it; since they were made only to comply with those Persons, whose Dissatisfaction would have proved more *uneasy* to one of his Humour, than all that distant Noise of Cannon, which he would often listen to with a great deal of Tranquility. Besides, the great and almost only Pleasure of Mind he seem'd addicted to, was *Shipping* and *Sea-Affairs*; which seem'd to be so much his Talent for *Knowledge*, as well as *Inclination*, that a War of that Kind, was rather an *Entertainment*, than any *Disturbance* to his Thoughts.

I F he did not go himself at the Head of so magnificent a Fleet, 'tis only to be imputed to that *Eagerness* of Military Glory in his Brother; which, under the Shew of a decent Care for preserving the *Royal Person* from Danger, engross'd all *that Sort of Honour* to himself, with as much Jealousy of any others interposing in it, as a King of another Temper, would have had of *his*. 'Tis certain, no Prince was ever more fitted by Nature for his

his Country's Interest, than he was in all his *Maritime Inclinations*; which might have proved of sufficient Advantage to this Nation, if he had been as careful of depressing all such Improvements in *France*, as of advancing and encouraging *our own*: But it seems he wanted *Jealousy* in all his *Inclinations*, which leads us to consider him in his PLEASURES.

WHERE he was rather *abandon'd*, then *luxurious*; and like our Female Libertines, apter to be perswaded into *Debauches*, for the Satisfaction of *Others*, than to seek, with Choice, where most to please *Himself*. I am of Opinion also, that in his *later Times*, there was as much of *Laziness*, as of *Love*, in all those Hours he passed among his Mistresses; who, after all, only served to fill up his *Seraglio*, while a *bewitching* Kind of Pleasure, called *Santring*, and talking without any Constraint, was the true *Sultana Queen* he delighted in.

HE was surely inclined to *Justice*; for nothing else wou'd have retain'd him so fast in the *Succession* of a *Brother*, against a *Son* he was so fond of, and the Humour of a Party which he so much fear'd. I am willing also to impute to his *Justice* whatever seems, in some Measure, to contradict the general Opinion of his *Clemency*; as his suffering always the Rigour of the Law to proceed, not only against all *Highway-men*, but also several others, in whose Cases the *Lawyers*, according to their wonted Custom,

Custom, had sometimes used a great deal of Hardship and Severity.

HIS Understanding was quick and lively in little Things, and sometimes would soar high enough in great ones, but unable to keep it up with any long Attention, or Application. Witty in all Sorts of Conversation; and telling a Story so well, that, not out of Flattery, but the Pleasure of hearing it, we seemed ignorant of what he had repeated to us ten Times before; as a good Comedy will bear the being often seen. Of a wonderful Mixture; losing all his Time, and setting his whole Heart upon the Fair Sex; yet, neither angry with Rivals, nor in the least nice as to their being belov'd; and while he sacrific'd all Things to his Mistresses, he would use to grudge and be uneasy at their losing a little of it again at Play, tho' never so necessary for their Diversion; nor would he venture five Pounds at Tennis to those Servants, who might obtain as many Thousands, either before he came thither, or as soon as he left off.

FULL of Dissimulation, and very *adroit* at it; yet no Man easier to be imposed on; for his great Dexterity was in coufening himself, by gaining a little one way, while he lost ten times as much another; and by caressing those Persons most, who had excluded him the oftenest; and yet the quickest in the World at spying such a Ridicule in another.

C

E A S Y

8 *A short Character of*

EASY and good-natur'd to all People in Trifles, but in great Affairs severe and inflexible; in one Week's Absence quite forgetting those Servants, to whose Faces he could hardly deny any Thing. In the Midst of all his Remissness, so industrious and indefatigable upon some particular Occasions, that no Man would either toil longer, or be able to manage it better.

HE was so liberal, as to ruin his Affairs by it; for Want in a King of *England*, turns Things just upside down, and exposes a Prince to his People's Mercy. It did yet worse in him; for it forc'd him also to depend on his Great Neighbour in *France*, who play'd the Broker with him sufficiently in all those Times of Extremity. Yet this Profuseness of his, did not so much proceed from his Overvaluing those he favour'd, as from his Undervaluing any Sums of Money which he did not see; tho' he found his Error in this, but, I confess, a little of the latest.

HE had so natural an Aversion to all Formality, that with as much Wit as most Men ever had, and as Majestick a Mien, yet he could not, on Premeditation, act the Part of a King for a Moment, either in Parliament, or in Council; either in Words, or Gesture; which carry'd him into the other Extream, (more inconvenient of the two for a Prince) of letting all Distinction and Ceremony fall to the Ground, as useles and foppish.

HIS

King CHARLES, II. 9

HIS Temper, both of Body and Mind, was admirable ; which made him an easy generous Lover, a civil obliging Husband, a friendly Brother, an indulgent Father, and a good-natur'd Master. If he had been as solicitous about improving the Faculties of his Mind, as he was in the Management of his bodily Health ; tho' alas ! This prov'd unable to make his Life long, that had not fail'd to make it Famous.

HE was an illustrious Exception to all the common Rules of Physiognomy ; for, with a most *Saturnine*, harsh sort of Countenance, he was both of a merry and a merciful Disposition ; and in the last Thirty Years of his Life, as fortunate as those of his Father had been dismal and tumultuous. If his Death had some Appearance of being Untimely, it may be partly imputed to his extream healthy Constitution, which made the World as much surpriz'd at his Dying before Threescore, as if nothing but an ill Accident could have killed him.

I would not say any Thing on so sad a Subject, if I did not think that Silence it self would in such a Case signify too much ; and therefore, as an Imperial Writer, I am oblig'd to observe, that the most knowing, and the most deserving of all his Physicians, did not only believe him Poyson'd, but thought himself so too, not long after, for having declar'd his Opinion a little too boldly.

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10 *A short Character, &c.*

BUT here I must needs take Notice of an unusual Piece of Justice, which yet all the World has almost unanimously agreed in; I mean, in not suspecting his Successor of the least Connivance at so horrid a Villany; and perhaps there is hardly a more remarkable Instance of that invincible Power of Truth and Innocence: For it is next to a Miracle, that so Unfortunate a Prince, in the midst of all those Advantages he lies under, should be yet clear'd of this, even by his greatest Enemies, notwithstanding all those Circumstances that used to give a Suspicion, and that extrem Malice, which has of late attended him in all his other Actions.



T H E



THE CONFERENCE, &c.

Faithfully taken by his Secretary.

Priest.



AY it please your Grace,
I come from his Majesty,
who sent me on Purpose
to wait on you.

Duke. I AM exceed-
ingly beholding to his
Majesty for all his Favours. I thought I had
long ago been out of his Rememb'rance. Pray,
Sir, take a Chair. And what may your Er-
rand be?

Priest. His Majesty being inform'd of your
Grace's Illness, and as it becomes a Prince who
has a true Regard for his Subjects; compassi-
onating the dangerous Circumstances you are
in at present, commanded me to use my best
Endeavours to reclaim your Grace from that
heretical

12 *The CONFERENCE, &c.*

heretical Communion, 'tis now your Unhappiness to embrace, and reconcile you to the Catholick Church, out of which there is no Salvation.

Duke. I perceive, Sir, you're a Priest; *Sam.* bring up a Bottle of Wine, and clean Glasses — Do you smoke, Sir?

Priest. A N'T please your Grace, I did not come to drink, but —

Duke. W E L L, well, a Glas now and then won't spoil Conversation. But do you say, Sir, there's no Salvation to be had out of the Pale of the Catholick Church?

Priest. 'T I S not my private Opinion, all the great Doctors of our Church maintain it.

Duke. A N D by this Catholick Church, you mean the Church of *Rome*, don't you?

Priest. I do.

Duke. W H Y, then Father, I am afraid you'll find it a hard Matter to bring me to have a good Opinion of her. (*Enter Boy with the Bottle and Glasses*) Set them down before us, and get you gone. Come, Father, here is to his Majesty's good Health.

Priest. I humbly thank your Grace, but you have fill'd me too unmercifully, I can never —

Duke. N E V E R take off such a Trifle, you are no Priest then. Come, I'll engage it never indisposes you. What would the King say to you, should he know you refused his Health.

Priest. W E L L then, I submit: His Majesty's (*Drinks off his Glass*) Health, and your Grace's Commands must never be disputed. *Duke.*

The CONFERENCE, &c. 13

Duke. B U T all this while, Father, you take no (*Playing with the Cork*) Notice of my fine Gelding here. Do but observe his exquisite Shape : What a fine turn'd Neck is there ? His Eyes, how lively and full ? His Pace, how Majestick and Noble ? I'll lay a hundred Guineas, there's nothing in *Newmarket* can compare with him.

Priest. A N't please your Grace, I see no Horse.

Duke. W H Y, don't you see me play with his Mane, stroke him under the Belly, clap his Buttocks, and manage him as I please ?

Priest. E I T H E R your Grace is merrily disposed, or else your Illness has had a very unlucky Effect upon your Grace's Imagination. Upon my Sincerity I see nothing but a Cork in your Hand.

Duke. H O W, my Horse dwindled into a foolish Piece of Cork ? Come, Father, this is very unkindly done of you, to turn the finest Gelding in *Europe*, whose Sire was a true *Arab*, and had a better Genealogy to show, than the best Gentleman in *Wales*, or *Scotland*, can pretend to : Nay, whose illustrious Ancestors have had the Honour to carry several Sultans of *Babylon*, Caliphs of *Egypt*, Grand Seigniors of *Constantinople*, and Xeriffs of *Morocco* upon their Backs ; to turn, I say, a Creature so well descended into an insignificant idle Cork—— It surprizes me, it puts me into Confusion, I can't tell what to say, or do ; therefore at my Request once more observe him more carefully, and tell me your Opinion. *Priest.*

14 The CONFERENCE, &c.

Priest. NOT to flatter then this melancholy Humour in your Grace, which may but serve to confirm and rivet it the more in you, I must roundly and fairly tell your Grace, that 'tis a Cork, and nothing but a Cork.

Duke. 'Tis hard, that a Person of my Quality's Word won't be taken in such a Matter, where I have not the least Prospect of getting a Farthing by imposing upon you. But, Father, how do you make good your Assertion? I say still 'tis a Horse, you tell me 'tis a Cork; how shall this Difference be made up between us?

Priest. VERY easily; for instance, I first examine (*taking the Cork from the Duke*) it by my Smell, and that tells me 'tis Cork. I next consult my Sight, and that affirms the same: Then I judge it by my Taste, and still 'tis Cork. In short, my Touch assures me 'tis Cork; and my Ears that have heard the Description of this Bark a hundred times, concur in the same Story. 'Tis impossible that all my Senses should be banter'd and cheated in an Affair of this Nature, and they are the proper Judges to appeal to upon such Occasions.

Duke. NAY, since you are so positive, Father, I won't contest the Matter with you, but e'en let it be a Cork. The Fumes arising from my Illness, (which I thank you for not flattering) I perceive had somewhat disorder'd me: But now they are blown over, and I see as plain as a Pike-Staff, that 'tis nothing but

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a Cork — So now, Father, if you please, to the Business in Hand.

Priest. I presume your Grace believes the Trinity.

Duke. H A R K you, Father, before you proceed a Step farther ; thou'rt plaguily mistaken, if thou think'st to make the Trinity a stepping Stone to Transubstantiation. I thought you came to reconcile me to those Points, about which the two Churches differ, and not to spend your Breath to no Purpose upon a Subject wherein we are agreed.

Priest B E it so then ; and since your Grace has mention'd Transubstantiation, we'll enter into the Merits of that Controversy. I need not remind your Grace, that no Article of our Holy Religion is so expressly laid down in Scripture as that ; for what can be plainer than *Hoc est Corpus meum* ?

Duke. B U T under Favour, Father, 'tis not so plain as you imagine. 'Tis certain the Primitive Christians believed nothing of the Matter, nor ever dreamt of a Corporal Presence: For what Tragical Work would *Lucian*, *Porphyry*, *Celsus*, and the other learned Adversaries of Christianity have made with Christian Apologists, who used to charge the Pagans with the Barbarity of their Human Sacrifices, expose the *foible* of their Deities, and droll upon old *Saturn*, for devouring his own Children, had Transubstantiation been the avowed Belief of those primitive Times ?

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16 *The CONFERENCE, &c.*

How would they have insulted the Christians, and turn'd off the Edge of this Recrimination from themselves, cou'd they have taxed the Christians with that most monst'rous, most absurd, and most barbarous Principle of eating the very God that made and redeem'd them?

Priest. HOWEVER, this Article, as absurd and monst'rous as your Grace represents it, has the Countenance of Fathers and Oecumenial Councils, and has been asserted by all the celebrated Doctors of the *Greek* and *Latin* Church, not to mention a constant Series of Miracles that have supported it ever since the Institution of our Religion.

Duke. As for your Fathers and Councils, I value them not a Farthing. They were Men as well as we, and consequently as liable to Mistakes. Besides, I must tell you plainly, 'tis not fair to mention them out of a Library, where you may immediately be satisfied whether the Quotation is honest, or to any other but such who have carefully read them over in the Originals; whereas, 'tis common with you Priests to make a great pother about them to Tradesmen and Sea-men. 'Tis plain, the Fathers and Councils were never intended to be the Regulators of our Faith; for three Parts in four of Mankind, have neither Capacity, nor Leisure to read them; and of those few that do, fewer understand them; and even those that pretend to understand them are at endless Wars, whether they are genuine or no, and

The CONFERENCE, &c. 17

and make no Scruple to reject them when they don't serve their Turn.

Priest. T o let your Grace see I am a fair Adversary, I will at present lay aside both Fathers and Councils, and appeal even to your own Translation of the Bible, where at the Institution of this Mysterious Sacrament, our Saviour expressly tells his Disciples, *This is my Body.*

Duke. S o he tells them in the same Book, *I am the Door, and I am the Vine*; and yet I never heard, that any set of Men, or any particular Man, was ever so frantick as to maintain that he was either a Door, or a Vine, tho' they have as plain a Text to countenance it as you have for Transubstantiation. All these are figurative Expressions, such as daily occur in common Conversation, and none but Fools, out of Ignorance, or Knaves, out of Interest, interpret them in the literal Sense. — But to dismiss this Digression, prithee tell me, honest Father, whether, at the Celebration of the last Supper, our Saviour gave himself to be verily and really eaten by his Disciples.

Priest. N o doubt on't, for what says St. *Austin* upon this Occasion? *Christus portaverit Seipsum manibus suis.*

Duke. I F that Father was such a Coxcomb as to express himself so foolishly, what's that to me? — Well then, if our Saviour was really eaten by his Disciples at that Supper, it follows of Course, that he was really dead,
D 2 and

18 *The CONFERENCE, &c.*

and that he suffer'd Death, and was made an Oblation for the Sins of Mankind before he offer'd himself a Victim to the Justice of his Father upon the Cross, which I suppose you will hardly maintain.

Priest. MAY it please your Grace, these are Mysteries, imparted to us by Divine Revelation, which we are, with the utmost Submission, to believe, tho' they shock our Reason and Senses never so much.

Duke. I see, Father, I must refresh your Memory with this Piece of Cork, which I positively affirm once more to be a Horse: Just now you would be governed by the Senses in those Matters, that properly belong to their Tribunal, but now you disown the Jurisdiction of the Court, which is not honestly done.

Priest. BUT in Matters of Faith —

Duke. AND what of all that? No Man shall ever perswade me to believe against the plain Conviction of my Senses — Here's a consecrated Wafer, you tell me 'tis God Almighty; I say 'tis a Piece of Bread, and nothing else. If I examine it by my Taste, 'tis Bread; if by my Smell, Sight and Touch, 'tis Bread, still. Now, why, for the Sake of a dubious Phrase, which is agreeable to Sense and Reason, when understood Metaphorically, but involves a Million of Contradictions and Absurdities, when taken literally, should I set up a most monstrous and impious Doctrine,

The CONFERENCE, &c. 19

ctrine, in downright Opposition to common Sense and Reason, to the End of our Saviour's Suffering upon the Cross, which was to be performed but once, and not daily, as you assert in ten thousand different Places, and lastly to the Majesty of the Divine Essence.

Priest. MY Lord Duke, you must humble your Reason to reconcile your self to this Holy Mystery, which even the Angels themselves don't comprehend.

Duke. OUR Saviour, when he first instituted his Religion, wrought several Miracles before the People, by which he appeal'd to their Senses; so 'tis plain, he thought 'em the proper Judges of Miracles. When you have a *Mahometan*, or *Pagan*, to convert, you tell him of these same Miracles, and that they cou'd proceed from nothing but a Divine Power; and so you get him into your Church, but as soon as you have got him there, you preach up quite contrary Doctrines. Thus you subtilly appeal to his Senses to wheedle him into *St. Peter's* Net; but when you have him safe there, he must trust to them no longer: Nay, he must lay them aside as Enemies to the Catholick Truth.

Priest. AS Absurd as your Grace looks upon this Doctrine to be, 'tis believed by the Majority of the Christian World.

Duke. THAT'S worse and worse still: In all Ages and Nations of the World, Error ever drew more Profelytes after it than the Truth—

20 *The CONFERENCE, &c.*

Truth ——— But not to combat so inhuman, as well as nonsensical a Tenet any longer, I'll tell you a short Story. When I was sent Ambassador from the late King to *Paris*, in the Year 1670, I took over with me a young Black-a-moor Boy, who could just make a Shift to be understood in *English*; and this Boy one Holyday Morning, went along with some of my Gentlemen to see the Curiosities of so remarkable a City, and all of them at last went into *Notredame* Church, as the Priest was celebrating Mass. At the High-Mass the Lad was perfectly surpriz'd at their rich Habits, and fine Musick; and when the Priest came to the *Elevation*, he ask'd one of my Gentlemen, what that white Thing was, which the Man in the Party-colour'd Coat held up in his Fingers? Why, (replies he) these People believe it to be God-Almighty. Not long after, at a side Alter, he saw a Priest giving the Water to a Parcel of People upon their Knees, and putting it into their Mouths. What, (cries he to the Gentleman) do they eat their God after they have so solemnly worshipp'd him? Yes, answers he, this is their Belief. The Boy was so strangely confounded at what he had observed, that he spoke not a Syllable when he came Home; but was moping and musing by himself. I could not but take Notice of this Alteration in him at Dinner: So *Tom*, (says I to him) what's the Matter with thee? If thou'rt Ill, go down to the House-keeper:

The CONFERENCE, &c. 21

keeper : No, cries he, I am not sick, but I have seen a very odd Sight this Morning, which I can't help thinking on. I saw a Man in fine Cloaths show the People God, and they fell upon their Knees, and beat their Breast ; and afterwards I saw this Man put God into their Mouths, and they swallowed him. Well, says I, and where's the Harm of that, *Tom* ? I don't know, says the Boy, why they should eat God, since he does us no Harm ; but if they have the same Power over the Devil, I wish we had a Hundred, or Two of these fine Men in our Country to eat the Devil for us ; for we cannot rest for him a Nights ; he pinches us in the Arms, sows our Palm Wine, spoils our Victuals, and is so plaguy Mischievous, he and his young Cubs, that we should be glad to get rid of him at any Rate. And this Reflection a poor ignorant Lad, just come from *Guinea*, made of himself.

Priest. I AM sorry to see your Grace in a Disposition so unfit to receive those sublime Truths, but pray let me ask you one sober Question. Is it not safer, as well as more discreet, to fly into the Arms of a Church that is Infallible, than be guided by a wand'ring Meteor, by an *Ignis Fatuus*, for I never heard the Gentlemen of your Communion pretend to be exempt from Error ?

Duke. THAT shows their Modesty ; and I promise you, Father, to reply to you more particularly to this Point, when your Doctors have

22 *The CONFERENCE, &c.*

have agreed where to lodge their Infallibility. In the mean time, 'tis not worth your while to talk of it, for I shall lead you such a Wild-Goose Chase from General Councils to the Conclave, and from thence to the Cathedra, and so back again, in an everlasting Circle, that you'll soon be weary of the Labyrinth.

Priest. WELL then, your Grace cannot but own, that we are the only Church that are possess'd of the Sacred Treasure of Miracles, and these are such evident Demonstrations of —

Duke. WELL, Father, since we have fallen again, I don't know how, upon the Chapter of Miracles, I will take Care to entertain you with one that happened but last Winter in *Northumberland*, and comes confirmed from so many Hands, both Catholick and Protestant, that he must be a rank Infidel indeed, who dares dispute the Credibility of it. But as I have one of the most Treacherous Memories in the World, I won't pretend to relate it to you my self, but one of my Servants shall do it — Here; (*To one of his Gentlemen coming into the Room*) go bid *Long John* come to me immediately.

Priest. YOUR Grace may save your self that Trouble, if you please, for I am as well satisfied as if I had heard it.

Duke. NAY, you're no Priest for my Money if you refuse to hear a Miracle, and what is more, a Catholick Miracle. (*Long John enters.*) Come *John*, you must oblige this worthy Gentleman

The CONFERENCE, &c. 23

Gentleman here, who is come upon no less Errand than the Salvation of your Master's Soul, with the Relation of that famous Miracle, that happened last Winter in *Northumberland*.

John. Y O U R Grace had always a Right to command me. Why then, Sir, you are to understand, that within Two Miles of my Lord *Widdrington's* House, in the above-mentioned Country, there was a small Village, (I am sorry I have forgot its Name, but I hope I shall recover it anon) which wholly belongs to his Lordship; by the same Token most of the Inhabitants, in Complaisance, I suppose, to the Landlord, are *Roman Catholicks*.

Duke. V E R Y well, proceed.

John. A N antient Woman of this Village was accidentally sitting at her Door, about Three in the Afternoon, when my Lord's *Priest* happened to brush by her. She immediately ran after him, and told him, Dear Father, you must never think of going to his Lordship's to Night, the Ways are slippery and full of Sloughs, the Days are short, and you'll certainly be benighted before you can have got half the Way thither; I tremble to think what would become of you, should you lose the Road, or fall into a Ditch; therefore let me perswade you to accept of a sorry Supper and Lodging at my House; I am sure my Lord will not be offended with you, and to Morrow you'll have the whole Day before you.

E

Duke.

24 *The CONFERENCE, &c.*

Duke. AND what Reply made the Priest to this?

John. AFTER a little humming and hawing upon the Matter, he considered it would be his wisest Way to take up his Quarters that Night at the old Woman's, so he followed her to her House; she led him into a pretty snug warm Parlour, made him a Fire Nose high; then going into the Yard, slew a Barn-door Fowl with her own Hands, clapt it on the Spit, and when 'twas ready, neatly dish'd up with Egg-Sawce; and who so chearful as she and the Priest over their Supper.

Duke. 'T WAS well done.

John. RESOLVING to give so worthy a Guest the best Entertainment her House afforded, after Supper she presented him with a Dish of Nuts of her own gathering, and then thwacked his Guts with Apples and Ale, and was very liberal of her Nutmeg and Sugar. Thus they pass'd away the Hours merrily: At last Bed-time approach'd, our good old Landlady shewed the Father the Chamber he was to lie in, wished him a happy Night, and departed; but being a curious Woman, as most of the Sex are possessed with the Spirit of Curiosity, she peep'd thro' the Key-hole, to see how the Priest managed Matters by himself.

Priest. HONEST Friend, you may drop your Miracle here, if you please, I'll hear no more on't.

Duke. FATHER, your Zeal has got the Heels of your Discretion. Upon my Word, here's no Trap laid for a bawdy Jest, nothing, in short, but what her Majesty and Maids of Honour may hear.

John. TO her infinite Surprize and Admirati-
on, she saw him jump stark naked as ever he was
born, not into the Sheets, tho' they smelt most de-
liciously of Lavender and Roses, but into the
Blan-

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Blankets. Down Stairs she hurries, full of Grief and Confusion, which would not let her wink all Night ; and Lord, cries she, *what a wicked Age is this we live in ! How cold and uncharitable, when a Person of such Merit and Learning, who has resided too so long in the Family, has not a Shirt to put on his Back ? I could never have thought my Lord so niggardly.* These afflicting Thoughts, wholly occasioned by her Zeal for Religion, and the Professors of it, made that Impression upon her, that she did not enjoy a Minute's Repose that Night. Early she got up the next Morning, and measured out Six Ells of the finest flaxen Linnen she had, which was of her own spinning. Presently down comes the Father into her Parlour, she enquires of him how he past the Night, and was ravished with joy to hear he had slept so well. After this, comes in a thund'ring Toast, with a full Tankard of humming Stale Beer. The Priest and she soon ended it between them, and now she had Courage enough to tell him what she had observed the Night before. Father, *says she*, I beg your Pardon, for being so impudent as to peep thro' your Key-hole last Night ; and truly I was grieved to the Heart, to see that a Gentleman of your Education and great Parts should be without a Shirt. Come, never blush for the Matter, I know it is so ; but here are Six Ells of my best Linnen, which will make you Two very good Shirts, and I humbly desire you to accept of them.

Duke. WHY, Father, here is the Quintessence of true Christianity for you.

John. WELL, Daughter, *replies he*, I accept of your Present in good Part (for Priests and Lawyers are seldom guilty of refunding) not that I shall have any Occasion for making Use of it my self,

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for you must understand, I belong to an Order, which obliges us to wear Woollen next our Skin, but it may serve to make Towels for the Altar, and the like, and therefore I will take it with me. Then ordering the good Woman to kneel, he gave her his Benediction, and prayed, that whatever she began to do after he was gone, she might continue doing 'till Sun-setting. Our Landlady little imagining, that a Miracle was entailed upon the Father's Blessing, very innocently fell to measure the small Remainder of Linnen she had left, when to her great Astonishment, and that of her Family, she continued in this Posture 'till the Sun was set, and got such a prodigious Quantity of Linnen by this Means, that next Week she was able to buy out her Lease, and is now the topping Dame of the Parish.

Duke. WHAT think you now, Father, of *Long John's Story*?

John. THIS Miracle in a Moment ran thro' the Four Northern Counties, every Village and Hamlet rung of it; nay, it cross'd the *Tweed*, and fill'd the Ears of the unbelieving *Scots*. The Priest, wherever he came, was worshipped and respected like a little Divinity, and the Woman was magnified by all as a true Pattern of primitive Zeal, Piety and Charity, since Heaven had been at the Pains to reward her in so extraordinary a Manner.

Priest. HONEST Friend, let me desire you to be as concise as you can, for, in plain Truth, I am weary of your Story already.

John. AT the lower End of this Village, (where the above-mentioned miraculous Scene happened) lived another old Woman, a Catholick likewise by Perswasion, who hoping to gain as much by her Godliness as her Neighbour had done before her, looked

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looked out as sharply for the Father, as a *Yorkshire* Attorney does for a Purse-proud litigious Client. At last, to her mighty Satisfaction, she sees him go by her Door; immediately she trots after him, tells him of the Depth of the Ways, and the great Danger he run of being lost, desires him to consult his own Safety, and not expose himself to those Casualties which he might so reasonably expect from the Badness of the Ways, and the Darkeness of the Night. With these plausible Insinuations she wheedles the Priest into her House, and to secure him entirely to her Interest, treats him with a Shoulder of Mutton, and a Couple of Capons for Supper.

Duke. SHE took the right Course to gain her Point, I must needs own; for ever while you live, Father, tickle a Priest and a Woman by the Belly, if you intend to make them yours.

John. WHEN the Table-cloth was taken away, our cunning Hypocrite, who was resolved to out-do her Neighbour's Entertainment in her Provisions, accordingly brings in a double Bottle of Metheglin, fills a Bumper, and begins Prosperity to the Catholick Religion. She tells the Father, that a judicious Person lately told her, that a Cardinal was coming from *Rome*, who was to make his publick Appearance in *Cheapside*, in Cloth of beaten Silver and Gold, marry was he, and that he was to convert the whole Nation, and then, Father, (*says she*) we shall see happy Times. The honest Priest was so taken up with his Pot and Pipe, that he neither opposed, nor seemed to approve her Discourse. In this Manner they drank and prattled, 'till the Liquor found such a Way into their *Pericraniums*, they could hardly see one another. The Priest, unable to hold up his Head any longer, desired

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fired to be conducted to the Room where he was to lie that Night ; the old Woman, with much ado, gets him up Stairs, leads him to his Bed, wishes him a thousand Good-Nights, and so leaves him, with a trusty Jug of Ale by his Bed-side, that if he awaked in the Night, he might have something to refresh his Conscience and Thirst at once.

Duke. WELL said, *John.*

John. BY that Time the Priest had rigged himself, and was come down into the Parlour, our ancient Matron had tossed up a nice Breakfast, out of the Remainder of the Capons, which being highly seasoned, proved a very effectual Shoeing-horn for t'other Bumper. And now, with Tears in her Eyes, she began the same Story as her Neighbour had done, lamenting the horrid Ingratitude of the Times, that so learned and devout a Man as he should want a Shirt ; to prevent which, for the Future, as far as it lay within her small Capacity, she made bold to make him a small Present of a Dozen Ells of her best Linnen Cloth.

Priest. YOU'LL never have done, I'm afraid.

John. THE Priest not being Conjuror enough to dive into the Bottom of her Heart, to know whether she was guided by any mercenary By-ends, or whether her Intensions were real, heartily thanked her for the noble Present she had made him ; and folding it up under his great Coat, bid her kneel down, and laying his Sacerdotal Fist upon her Head, he gave her his Blessing, and prayed, that whatever this good Woman began to do after he was gone, she might continue doing 'till Sun-setting.

Duke. AND what fell out upon this ?

John. THE Father was no sooner got over the Threshold, but our Matron, who had laid all her Tackle

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Tackle in readiness, was going to measure the Remainder of her Linnen ; but then considering, upon second Thoughts, what a large Morning's Draught she had taken with the Priest, and being a Wise Prudent Woman into the Bargain, she thought it would be convenient to make a little Water before she fell to Work. She did so, and continued in mingent Circumstances, from the Morning 'till Night, evacuating so plentiful a Stream, that she in a Manner occasioned a second Deluge. In short, all the low Lands in *Northumberland* suffered by it; Twenty Four Mills upon strict Examination were found to be overwhelmed by this sudden Inundation, besides Cottages, and Hay-ricks numberless. This old Woman conscious of her own Deceit and Hypocrisy, has not dared to shew her Head among her Neighbours since this fatal Accident. All true Catholicks rejoice at the just Dispensation of Heaven's Favours, and so my Story concludes.

Duke. COME, *John*, there's something to make you amends for the Pains you have taken. (*John bows, and quits the Room*) Well, Father, what's your Opinion now of this Miracle.

Priest. O U T of Respect to your Grace, I was content to fit out the whole Story, tho' I guess'd at first where-about's it would end. But since your Grace is pleased to demand my Opinion, all I can say to the Matter is, That it was contrived on Purpose to make us poor suffering Catholicks ridiculous to the People.

Duke. A L A S ! Poor Sufferers ; in Troth I pity you. However, Father, I dare lay a small Wager with you, that where your Church has suffered once, she has made the Reformed suffer a hundred Times. I need not descend to Particulars, every
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Country in *Europe* being able to bear Testimony to this Truth.

Priest. I FIND then, I can expect to make no Profelyte of your Grace.

Duke. BE assured, that neither you, nor any of your Cloth will ever gain that Point upon me—I tell thee, Father, frankly and freely, that were there no Idolatry, nor Superstition, nor Cheating practised by thy Church, as I am sure there is, I would have nothing to do with her, while she damns all that are not within her own Pale, which is almost three Parts in four of the Globe. A Church without Charity, the distinguishing Character of our Religion, for all she glitters with Jewels and Gold, is no Church for me, I promise you.

Priest. THO' I have been unsuccessful in my well-meant Endeavours, yet I shall always continue to pray for your Grace's Conversion.

Duke. AS for that, do as you please, it signifies nothing, but fail not to commend me to their Majesties, and tell 'em, that tho' I cannot be of their Perswasion, yet they have not a more dutiful Subject in their Dominions than I am.

AFTER a few Compliments his Grace and he parted

FINIS.

